

The Polynesian.

**Game and Salt Discoveries.** Mr. Selim E. Woodworth, of San Francisco, furnishes to the *Alta California* some interesting information in reference to the large salt and guano lagoon, or lake, of Lower California, first brought into notice as a whaling ground some three years since. This inlet extends, adjacent to the coast, from latitude  $26^{\circ} - 40'$  to  $28^{\circ} - 4'$ , about one hundred miles in length, by from twenty to fifty miles in breadth. It is first seen on the Cape San Lucas promontory, of the whaling ship, *Ocean Bear*, some three years ago, who found it abounding in whales, it being the resort of the female whales for calving, from December to April. Since that period, numerous vessels from the Sandwich Islands have visited the place: but the difficulty encountered in effecting an entrance, has deterred many from repeat-

The channel lies some distance north of the 27th parallel of latitude, or below the southern end of Cedros Island. The land is low and sandy, and covered with stunted shrubbery, which, however, is invisible some distance at sea. The sea breaks heavily in bad weather two miles out, and owing to this, and the fact that the channel is crooked, it is a most difficult and dangerous place for those who are not acquainted with the bar. The bar, which can be carried in: but only twelve fathoms at low tide. For this reason, only small ships should venture to cross the bar, which assumes to strangers a very formidable appearance. After crossing the bar the water deepens to five and soon

after to several fathoms, which depth is found in nearly every part. The entrance is between low sand-pits, not more than a thousand yards apart, from this the lake opens at once, and presents the appearance of a vast bay. The ground is covered in seal and whale. One informant, in speaking of the latter, remarked that "the place was alive with them." It is not likely that they will prove so abundant after the approaching whaling fleet have killed off the cow whales, and driven them away from their ancient haunt. The Mexican Government, quick to profit by the enterprise and industry of others, have already established an agent there, who exacts tonnage dues from all vessels entering for whaling purposes. The waters being generally

smooth, the fisheries are pursued with success. The islands contain numerous lakes, having been formed in this lake. In some five islands, situated towards the western border, two of which are found to contain immense deposits of guano, and more or less exist on all the others. The largest island is about three miles long by a mile in width, and on this alone it is estimated that there are upwards of 100,000 tons of guano. This was ascertained by means of this were brought here by Capt. Scammon, who came up on the last trip of the steamer *Senator*. It proves to be precisely the same as that found on Elide Island, being seal and bird deposits. In fact, all the guano found along that coast is of the same quality. It has been purchased under the contract to obtain fish and seals from the Mexican Guano Company, who have denounced and

have probably commenced working them by this time. They have had two schooners employed for some time carrying guano to the vessels loading at Elide from the small adjacent islands. Elide is now well cleared off, and the next ship will completely exhaust its stock of guano, when the season of operations will be removed to the principal ones in the group lately discovered. The last fleet of whalers who entered arrived too late in the season for all of them to fill up, and to atone for this, several of them loaded with guano from the principal island. This has now been stopped by the agent of the Company.

Still another resource has been discovered. Immense deposits of salt exist along the margins of the lake, produced by the process of evaporation which has been going on for ages. A Mexican has secured from his Government the exclusive right to work and export this, and he had at last accounts, several schooner loads ready for shipment. These salt deposits are of infinite extent, and exist in all directions around the borders of the lake. There are also evidences of great mineral wealth in the highlands.

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**Explaining Things.**

Nothing can be *fully* explained. In every department of knowledge, if we go a few steps from the surface, we find that which is visible upon the surface, we come to the absolute mystery which no man can explain. Ask the most learned surgeon to explain the motion of the hand. He tells you that the hand is at one end of a bone which has a joint at the other end; that a band of flesh, which he calls a muscle is attached at one end to this bone and at the other end to another bone beyond the joint, in such a way that, when the muscle contracts, the bone moves upon the joint and carries the hand along. A nerve leads from the brain to the muscle and carries the influence by which the will acts upon the muscle.

If you ask the surgeon how the brain acts upon the nerve, and the nerve upon the muscle, he can tell you no more than the smallest child or the most ignorant savage can. What the nervous influence is—whether it is a fluid or a vibration, or whether it is something different from either of these—is known to God, but it is not known by any of the children of men.

We see a pebble fall to the ground, and we are told that it is drawn by the attraction of gravitation; but what the attraction of gravitation is—how it reaches up from the earth and takes hold of every atom of the pebble and pulls it down—is to

us an unfathomed mystery. There must be some material connection between the stone and the earth. This was so plain to Sir Isaac Newton that he regarded the person who denied it as incapable of comprehending the proposition. But if we pass our hand between the stone and the earth we cannot feel any substance, we cannot see any with our eyes, and yet we know that there is some matter interposed between the two bodies which draws them together with tremendous power. We know some of the properties of gravitation; we know that it draws all ponderous bodies together with

Oxygen is more ready to enter into chemical combination with zinc than it is with copper, but why this is so not all the chemists in the world can tell. Vast indeed is the amount of knowledge in regard to chemical affinity; what substance exhibits the greatest power with the greatest energy, how it manifests itself in thousands of curious and complicated and wonderful operations, all in accordance with fixed and inflexible laws, have been learned by patient

and laborious study of many among the greatest intellects of our race; but what the essence of chemical affinity is, or how it takes hold of the atoms which it moves, has never been ascertained.

If we attempt to understand thoroughly any fact whatever which comes under our observation, we shall find that a few steps will bring us to the dark gulf of profound and unfathomed mystery. Carlyle says: "Sooty Manchester, it too is spanned by the skepy firmament, and there is Life in it, and Death in it; and it is every whit as unimaginable, as inconceivable, as the oldest Salem or prophetic city!"

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